

Picture Perfect

So How Long Will Your Digital Prints Last?

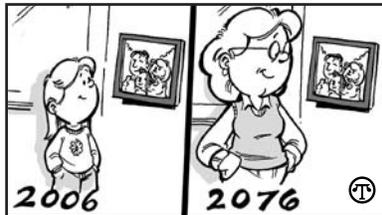
(NAPSA)—Once revolutionary, digital cameras have become a fact of everyday life.

While digital photography has many benefits, consumers need to be aware of the risks facing their images. Because hard drives and digital media can be damaged and file formats can become obsolete, making photographic prints with the highest-quality inkjet printing technology is the best way to share and preserve memories.

But can an inkjet print last as long as traditional lab prints? With some basic understanding regarding print longevity, today's photos, printed on affordable home printers, can last 100 years or more—far longer than traditional color lab prints, which is important since nearly three out of four people want their photos to last forever, according to a recent PictureMate Family Memories Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive.

Today, inkjet prints can be made on a wide variety of papers with dye- or pigment-based inks. Although both can provide excellent quality, dye-based inks achieve lower levels of longevity on different kinds of paper while pigment-based inks offer greater resistance to light, ozone and water on a variety of papers.

So with the goal of keeping those treasured photos for years to come, remember the following points:



There are four points to focus on so your photo memories won't fade.

1. Ink & Paper Make A Big Difference

Major printer manufacturers design ink and paper to work as a system to deliver the highest possible print quality and, in some cases, the best possible print longevity. The Epson Stylus C88, for example, retailing for about \$79, uses Epson DURABrite Ultra pigment inks and produces prints that can last more than 100 years when framed under glass.

Consumers looking to save money by purchasing ink cartridges and/or paper from third parties, including store brands and even traditional film manufacturers, should beware. Their prints may not have the same image quality or longevity as the printer manufacturer's system of ink and paper.

Buyers should also be skeptical of any one-size-fits-all, universal compatibility claims for nonbrand ink and paper.

2. Too Much Light

There is no greater danger for a photo than direct exposure to light.

However, when it comes to light, photos printed by inkjet printers can fare much better than traditional lab prints.

It's important to understand a printer's capability to provide protection against fading that best meets your needs.

If you don't know how your printer stacks up, or are considering buying a new printer and want an independent comparative longevity rating, you can visit Wilhelm Imaging Research at www.wilhelm-research.com.

3. Even Photos Hate Air Pollution

Gaseous pollutants, especially ozone, can directly affect how long an inkjet print lasts. The best and simplest way to protect any photo from gaseous pollutants, including smoke and cooking fumes, is to keep displayed photos behind glass in a frame, or in photo albums, and choose a printer that uses a pigment-based ink, which has greater resistance to ozone.

4. Keep 'Em Cool & Dry

Lastly, high temperature and humidity levels can negatively affect the longevity of photos. This goes for large prints displayed openly, as well as snapshots stored in shoeboxes in the back of a closet. Fortunately, home printers that use pigment-based inks when used with the right papers offer great resistance to humidity and temperature extremes.